

A
S E R M O N
PREACHED BEFORE
The HONOURABLE and RIGHT REVEREND
R I C H A R D
LORD BISHOP of DURHAM,
The RIGHT WORSHIPFUL
EDWARD MOSLEY, Esq; MAYOR,
And the CORPORATION of
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE,
A T T H E
C O N S E C R A T I O N
O F
St ANNE's CHAPEL in NEWCASTLE,
On FRIDAY, SEPT. 2, 1768.

By RICHARD FAWCETT, D.D. *K*
VICAR of NEWCASTLE,
And CHAPLAIN in Ordinary to His MAJESTY.

*Published at the Request of His Lordship,
And The Mayor and Corporation.*

NEWCASTLE:

Printed by J. WHITE and T. SAINT,
For W. CHARNLEY in *Newcastle*, and
W. TAYLOR in *London*.

MDCCLXVIII.



T O
The HONOURABLE and RIGHT REVEREND
R I C H A R D,
By DIVINE PROVIDENCE,
LORD BISHOP of DURHAM.

T O
The RIGHT WORSHIPFUL
EDWARD MOSLEY, Esq;
MAYOR of NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE,
EDWARD COLLINGWOOD, Esq; RECORDER,
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JOHN BAKER, Esq;
FRANCIS FORSTER, Esq;
} ALDERMEN,
RICHARD LACY, Esq; SHERIFF.

This Sermon, Preached and Published
at their Request, is, with the greatest
Respect, Inscribed, by

Their Obedient Humble Servant,

Richard Fawcett.



A
S E R M O N, &c.

EPH. ii. 21, 22.

In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an Holy Temple in the Lord; In whom you also are builded together for an Habitation of God, through the Spirit.

IT need not be matter of surprize to us that we meet with many metaphors and allusions in the writings of St Paul taken from Building.—If no other reason were to be given for this, the Travels of a person in so public a Character would be sufficient to account for the fact. From what is recorded in

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Scripture, we may observe that this diligent Apostle, when he wrote to the Ephesians, had traversed various Countries, visited most of the principal Cities of Asia and Greece, and had been moreover in Italy. And tho', having things of more consequence to attend to, it was not to his purpose to take particular cognizance of the many remarkable and finished *Ædifices* either at Athens, Rome or elsewhere; Yet, it is not likely, that they would escape his observation entirely. On the contrary, it seems probable that he was no stranger to their Beauties. The Ideas they suggested were plainly familiar to him, and crowded into his thoughts on numberless occasions. Neither was he at any time disposed to reject the Modes of Expression to which these Ideas naturally led him. This great master of persuasion knew they were intelligible to all; He found they actually served to awaken the At-
tention

tention of persons versed in and thoroughly acquainted with the polite and liberal Arts; And consequently, that they were calculated to give a lively and pleasing variety to his language in all, even the most improved, Ages of the World.

But, though every portion of Scripture will bear to be placed in different lights, and which ever way it is turned may afford room for a variety of just reflections; Yet, it would seem, that the Original of this matter is to be derived from another Source, and cannot but be supposed to take its first Rise from what the Author of this Epistle was more intimately acquainted with, and from what bore the nearest relation to his subject, the Temple at Jerusalem; To which there is a plain allusion kept up in various passages of this Chapter, and from which an easy transition is made to the assertion in the text.

It is true indeed St. Paul has recourse here to these allusions in order to shew with greater spirit the superior excellency and comprehensiveness of that Plan which he laid before the world, when compared with the narrow and contracted System of Judaism; And whilst he carries our thoughts forward and at once opens a prospect for us into futurity, he leads to and points out those means by which thro' Christ and his Religion an Happy issue of things may be effectually attained.—But still, the Idea of a real and material Ædifice, destined and calculated in its original design for the most excellent of purposes, fixed from the first on a solid foundation, rising afterwards in just proportion and by regular steps to perfect strength and Beauty, is here carefully kept in view, and in a very lively picture presented to the Imagination; And therefore, this very Circumstance seems to afford a
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sufficient direction for our thoughts upon occasion of the particular Solemnity of this day:

Whether from this passage we should consider in general the propriety of setting apart Places and Buildings for religious purposes under the Christian dispensation;

Or, should endeavour more particularly to enforce upon the minds of all here present such a farther and spiritual Use which may be made of the Service appointed to be performed in these Places, that men themselves may become truly worthy and religious Characters, and at last be duly qualified, thro' the Power and Mediation of Christ, *to have Access to our Father which is in Heaven.*

Some may be apt to think, because the Jewish Temple has been destroyed
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and the whole ritual Law appointed to be observed in that *Ædifice* is now abrogated by the coming of our Saviour, that therefore no particular places need be appropriated for the purposes of that more Spiritual Religion he came from Heaven to inculcate. But, in order to prevent or correct this error, it should be remembered, (and the making the distinction will have its use in other cases as well as this under consideration at present) that tho' God has entered into a new Covenant with us thro' Christ; Yet he still treats and considers us as men. He does not hereby alter our mixed and compounded Constitution, does not take and remove us out of a State of probation and Tryal, nor absolutely annihilate the common failings and infirmities of our Nature. Our intellectual Faculties are neither so particularly strengthened, that we advance into the rank of Angels the instant we are called by the name of Christians, nor
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are our Affections and Desires at once so ordered and restrained that we are not in danger of being disturbed by any wrongness or irregularity in their movements.

In fact we still are Mortals, destined to go thro' the various Stages of our Existence, and to rise gradually from the impressions of Matter and Sense to such perfection of intellectual Knowledge and moral Worth as we are capable of reaching: And therefore, if we mean to be profitable either to ourselves or others, we must not overlook, rather must we be content and reckon it a duty indeed to make Use of, the means necessary and proper for attaining this perfection. Because all along thro' life we are *subject to like passions with other men*, whether we have lived under the Jewish or Christian Dispensation, whether we have been blessed with any express Revelation of God's Will from Heaven, or
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have been left to the meer guidance of natural Reason to discover it.

On this account, as God is undoubtedly and by all means to be worshipped, it seems highly proper that some Places should be separated from others for the public performance of this Worship; that some certain Tokens, some sensible Marks of that Distinction may be set up, which men ought to be encouraged to make in their own Minds from the earliest Age, between what is Religious and otherwise. And that some visible Memorials may appear and shew themselves of the Obligations We and all Creatures are under to pay just and reverential Regards to our Creator. Left, should this care not be taken, the Sense of Religion might be in danger of being obliterated and totally lost amongst many, Or supposing this Effect, with all its much to be dreaded consequences of Brutality and Barbarism,

were

were not to follow, lest, something very improper and wrong might be given into with regard to religion and its offices, were men left entirely to themselves in this respect, and no just assistance afforded them from without, for their doing what is proper and right.

And these reasons appear to receive additional weight from reflecting, that, in the present view we are taking, Religion is to be considered as a practical Science, and that the Christian dispensation contains a System of revealed Truths which are undiscoverable by the light of Reason ; Consequently this Science and the Modes of Worship it prescribes, together with the Evidences which support their truth, like all other Sciences must be taught by degrees. Perhaps it is absolutely necessary that we should commence with material objects. Undoubtedly the Assistance both of Example
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and Precept is wanted before its offices may be performed in any manly and acceptable manner. In this light therefore Places set apart for the purposes of Religion are plain and easy means of Instruction, whilst they remain constant and standing Admonitions to Duty in various respects. *The Name of God is in them set forth and eminently recorded, and like a City upon a hill they cannot be hid.*

Again, to be a little more particular; If we imagine Numbers linked and united together in Society, it is absolutely necessary that some Conveniences and Provisions should be made for that Social Worship, which good Sense recommends, and which the injunctions of Christianity expressly require from a People, as Members of a Community. In this respect then, the appropriating Places for the public offices of Religion seems
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in some measure a necessary Concomitant of a well-ordered and regularly established Society. It being highly expedient that Numbers belonging to the same Body should at proper intervals assemble together, and by agreed on Forms manifest to one another and the World, that *the Fear of God* is among them; That they should offer up, with becoming and manly Reverence to *Him that sitteth in the Heavens over All*, united Prayers and Supplications for the supply of common Wants, united Praises and Thanksgivings for public Blessings.

Should it be imagined that any Place used for other purposes, if commodious in certain circumstances, might promiscuously and equally be made at the same time to serve the Ends of Religion, and therefore that such an entire Appropriation as has been above set forth is needless; To this it may be answered, that

on this foot, first, the distinction above-mentioned between what is religious and otherwise, and which is generally necessary for preventing confusion in the well-ordering and methodizing our own Ideas, it is possible, would in many cases be wanting; Next, That good Effect, which the very Sight of an *Ædifice* or Place set apart for Divine uses has upon men's minds, (and that instantaneously) in bringing them to think with seriousness upon God and their Duty, would evidently be in Danger of being entirely lost. And, it is particularly on the positive side to be remembered, lastly, that the appropriating a Place for the sole purposes of Religion is of infinite Use and Assistance for our performing in it any office of a sacred nature in the most becoming and proper manner.

Man from the original Composition
and Nature of his Constitution is so li-
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able to be drawn aside by the force of Imagination and the Powers of Habit, that were we called to religious Exercifes in Places where Amusements have gone forward, or where Bufinefs is frequently or commonly tranfacted, the Ideas which fuch Amusements or Bufinefs fuggelt, (of what nature foever they might be) would be very apt to intrude and give us interruption. From meer Affociation they would float before the fancy, and thus prefent themfelves to the mind for admittance; And tho' perfons accuftomed to felf-command might not be in danger of being difturbed in this fituation, Yet, on one hand, even the Wifeft of men cannot always be upon their guard againft thefe infinuating Solicitations, And, on the other, in proportion to any weaknefs in the Underftanding or want of fteadinefs in the Affections, they would have force abundantly fufficient to break in upon the Compofednefs and Powers of
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our recollection. The consequence of which naturally must be, that instead of thoughts of Religion and dispositions towards its Offices, our attention would be engaged towards the World and its Affairs; Possibly towards what is vicious and wrong, and not towards what is Virtuous and Good. Whereas, by a place being set apart and disposed solely for sacred purposes, these inconveniencies, it is to be hoped, may be entirely removed. At least, the best and most likely method is then taken to exclude and banish all Ideas which stand in no relation to divine Worship, and to excite in us those that do. The very Place in which we find ourselves at once invites us to seriousness, and to prepare for the Duties we are about to perform. The Service is solemn, and our attention is fixed to it. Every thing conspires to subdue our vain Affections and keep the Heart from wandering, to bring on
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and continue in us a devout frame of mind.

The Representation which has been just made, I trust, will not be looked upon as imaginary. For it is real. It is indeed so perfectly agreeable to the Principles and Frame of human Nature, that, on one hand, I am persuaded, I might appeal to the Experience which many or most of you may have had for the truth of what is here advanced. On the other hand, it is to be observed, that it always has been in fact the Custom among Mankind, perhaps from their very Creation, to appropriate some Places for the sole purposes of Religion; into which as it was their care that nothing should enter inconsistent with the Rites appointed to be observed in them: So does History and some Remains of Antiquity inform us, that with regard to their outward Form and Structure as well as inward

inward Disposition, and Ornament, such Order, Neatness or Splendor was exhibited, as kept pace with the progress of Arts in different parts of the world, or comported with the more or less flourishing condition and circumstances of the persons concerned in their designation. The greatest and wisest of men thus plainly shewing what their own Opinion was of this practice, and with how distinguished a regard they wished and meant that these Places should be treated by others.

It is true indeed in the earlier Ages of the World direct and immediate intercourses with the Deity were not unusual. God was pleased to manifest himself to chosen and particular Persons, for the sake of declaring the purposes of his Will, and for the sake of confirming them and all true Worshipers in their Duty; And these Manifestations being made either by
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some visible Display of the Divine Majesty, or by some remarkable Communications in particularly awful and striking Dreams, These Events might afford reasons sufficient, why the Places where they happened should be pitched upon in preference to others as Places of Worship. The Spots which had been the very Scene of these Events could not but remind, in the strongest manner, the Persons who had been nearest concerned in them, of those Impressions of Awe with which they had been there once so deeply affected: They might, besides this, entertain humble Hopes, that Favours of the same kind would be there communicated to them, at some future period: And, moreover, supposing no special Command was intimated for the purpose, Common Sense might shew it was necessary that some distinguishing Mark should be put upon these Places, that they might remain standing Monuments, before Writing was in use, of the Reality of those

Revelations which had been vouchsafed them from the True God. But then, however this may try, it need not mislead our Judgments. The looking upon these Places as *Holy Ground*, calling them the *House of God* and the *Gate of Heaven*, was in general intended to assist us in apprehending, and induce us to believe in the Existence of an Almighty ; To heighten our Regards for him indeed, but not give us wrong notions of his Perfections, and thus render our Devotion extravagant. Neither the early and innocent practice of having frequent recourse to these Places, nor the express Command afterwards to erect a Tabernacle and Temple as *an Habitation for the mighty God of Jacob*, were ever meant to limit the Omnipresence of the Deity, (as might easily be made appear from numberless Passages in the Old Testament, which with great clearness as well as sublimity of expression establish that Doctrine) any more than the Fact of extraordinary Exertions of Divine Power, in
favour

favour of and for the protection of particular persons and people by Miracles, was ever meant to contradict, or need in any way be suffered to interfere with the Belief of that fundamental Principle of true Religion, a general and over-ruling Providence.

The Truth indeed is, these extraordinary Events, and the Acts of Worship performed and required to be performed in certain Places were designed as gradual Openings, and had a particular reference, to the coming of a Redeemer; And as, by taking things in this light, on one hand, we are enabled fully to justify the conduct of some of the most truly religious and eminent Men of Antiquity, in many instances; For example, that of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses, before the Coming of a Saviour; So, on the other hand, we can account for the slighting manner in which the Writers of the New Testament, (St. Paul particularly) speak of the whole Ritual Service

among the Jews, now a Saviour is come. —The Apostles mean hereby to secure the Professors of Christianity in general from Superstition, whilst they declare the Universality and Extensiveness of Christ's Authority and Protection, *now the middle Wall of Partition is broken down between Jew and Gentile, and the Vail is taken away*; But they mean not to sap the Foundations, or remove every thing out of its place, which may be of service towards supporting the Cause of true Religion.

In the same light also must we look upon that gracious declaration of our Lord, *where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them.** We learn from hence, that we need not go to a Temple at Jerusalem to worship, but all Temples are not hereby taken away in which we may worship. The whole Fabric of Religion would seem to be endangered if they were. Rather, on the contrary, fresh

* Matt. xviii. 20.

Obligations for the establishing of them arise out of the Christian Dispensation itself.

It is true we are now eased from the burthenfome load of Mosaical Rites which were many of them merely typical of the appearance of the Messiah; But we still must have Ceremonies expreffive of our Regard and Duty towards him, now he has appeared, or the Religion of a Christian will fall to the ground.

The Oracles of God are committed to us to keep, as they were to the Jews. Carefully therefore must we guard and keep them. We have Belief in an Almighty, and Faith in a Redeemer publicly to confess before men; We have an Altar to serve at as well as they had, and Sacrifices to offer upon that Altar. The Blood of Bulls and of Goats and the Ashes of an Heifer sprinkling the unclean are not required; But we have Sacraments to administer, our Bodies to present a living Sacrifice, our
Hearts

Hearts and Souls to purify, and the whole Man to cleanse from all Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit. We have others to encourage in the performance of these Duties as well as ourselves, and in public Communion with them have the Lord's Supper to partake of *in Remembrance of the All-sufficiency of that Sacrifice once offered to take away the Sins of the World.* In short, if a Service was ordained, the Jews as preparatory to the Appearance of our Lord in the Flesh, and a Place made choice of by God himself, for the constant and solemn Celebration of it; What seems more reasonable, than that under the Christian Dispensation, Places should be set apart, where Instructions should be held out and a Service performed, tending to remind and assure us of the *second coming of that same Lord unto eternal Salvation?* What more proper and becoming, than that according as Circumstances are, Temples should be erected, where with Order and Decency
a whole

a whole Neighbourhood may assemble, to offer continual Praises for the Blessing of these assurances, and in the midst of which they may chearfully *wait for the loving kindness of the Lord*, and prepare themselves for the most awful and interesting of all Events?

During the infant State of the Christian Church, and whilst the first Professors of our Faith were in constant danger of persecution, any extraordinary Buildings were not to be expected, but yet it would seem that even in the Apostles days some Places were separated from common Use, that religious Offices might with greater decency be performed in them. Witness, the particular Apartments in private Houses we read of,* the directions given for the right behaviour of persons assembled in them,† And more particularly that passage, where, on account of some irregularities committed in partaking of the Lord's Supper among the Corinthians, St.

* Col. iv. 15. Phil. ii. † 1 Tim. iii. 15.

Paul breaks out into this reproachful Question, *What! have ye not Houses to eat and drink in, or despise ye the Church of God?**

However, when Kingdoms and whole Countries were *turned unto the Lord*, when *Quiet Resting Places* were found for the Professors of our Holy Faith, it is well known, that the Custom of appropriating Buildings, and that with public and particular Ceremony for religious purposes, greatly prevailed; And as the Church of England upon good grounds hath adopted the Usage, the Law of the Land hath sufficiently shewn its approbation of it, by taking the *Ædifices* and Places thus set apart, together with the things contained in them, more immediately under her Protection, after they have been Consecrated.

Impressed with just Sentiments of this Matter, and truly sensible of the Importance of its Consequences, That very RESPECTABLE BODY which presides in this

* 1 Cor. xi. 22.

Town,

Town, Studious upon all occasions of the Good of the Public, and therefore Attentive to the care of Religion, as well knowing it must ever prove the most sure and effectual method of promoting the Good of the Public, hath, at its sole and that a large Expence, not only bestowed a sufficient portion of Ground, and erected and fitted up an *Ædifice* upon it, but, without being burthensome to the inhabitants, hath also made provision for Divine Service to be performed in it: And our Excellent Diocesan, as a proof of the ready Willingness of his Disposition to concur in so truly laudable and pious a design, hath added a noble Present for its Ornament.—It now remains, that You, my Brethren, on your Parts shew some Signs of Gratitude in return for the Generosity with which you have been treated by All your Benefactors.

What they desire, All that they want
and wish, is, that You would use what
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is provided for your spiritual Benefit and Advantage, for your real and mutual Improvement in the Knowledge of Christ and the unfeigned Practice of his Religion.

To this point tend the immediate Intercourse God held with the Fathers of old, the original appointment of Sacrifices in the World, the display of Miracles by persons commissioned to work them from Heaven, the Powers and Preaching of Prophets, the Ark of God's Covenant, together with the Tabernacle and House in which it was deposited, All were designed, even the Presence of the Lord between the Cherubims in the Jewish Temple, and the Coming of the Son of God afterwards in our Flesh were designed and furnished Materials, and no more than Materials, for men's Believing in and Obeying of Jesus.

Let not then this Place be abused to any other, to any unhallowed purposes,
but

but learn here how to *sanctify the Lord God in your Hearts*, to dedicate all the Powers both of your Minds and Bodies, Yourselfs and your Works to the Glory of your Redeemer. Commodious as it is now disposed for the more orderly Assembling together, *Forsake not*, I beseech you, when the Curiosity of this Day's Solemnity is over, *the Assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is*, but rather look upon it as a Duty of the last Importance, that You, your Families and Dependents attend the Services to be performed here, as often as it is possible.

You are now invited to the Comfort of religious Exercises and Improvements in various Ways. The Holy Scriptures are here solemnly read and the Gospel of Peace explained in its different parts, not indeed according to any wild Fancies, not according to the mere Inventions or Additions of men, but by those who, as far as human frailties permit, do not, dare

not utter any other *Words* than those of *Truth and Soberness*, because fully and deeply impressed with the Awfulness and Weight of that solemn Admonition, *If any man speak, let him speak as the Oracles of God.**

Ordinances are here administered, enjoined by no less Authority than that of *the Lord from Heaven*, And therefore if men renounce not the hopes of Salvation through a Redeemer, of the utmost consequence for all to partake of,

Prayers and Praises are here offered up in the prevailing *Name of the Son of God*; In themselves highly affecting, abundantly proper for weak, dependent Creatures to join in, and accommodated, moreover, to most Circumstances both in public and private life, from the first commencement of our Existence here, even to its very End. Such as, if listened to with attention, will teach you to be devout in the Closet, as well as industrious in your

* 1 Pet. iv. 11.

Callings, inspire you with a just Sense of Duty towards God and Man, render you good Subjects and good Men, and give a virtuous and amiable turn to your whole Behaviour.

Refuse not then these important Instructions, do not contemptuously despise, do not deprive yourselves of the benefit of any of these highly to be valued, these sacred Offices; Lest, this goodly Ædifice, now solemnly dedicated to the best of purposes, instead of an Object of Delight, a pleasant Memorial of Duty to you and your Generations, at once become, and, whilst time shall permit, remain a lasting Monument and Witness of your Impiety, a reproachful Aggravation of your Crimes.

It is true indeed where inhabitants are numerous, it is to be feared, there will be many sadly abandoned in their Characters, living as it were, *without God in the world*, but, in pity to their state, let
not

not the real good which the poorest persons are able to do by uniting in an Example of regular Attendance on divine Worship, be wanting, as a powerful inducement to all bad men in a neighbourhood speedily to have recourse to those Mercies of which they stand in more eminent need, and which only are to be obtained by the religion of Christ.

Again, where persons assemble from various parts of the Earth, tho' in general they may have imbibed right notions of God and Goodness, Yet, owing to the turn and course of their Education, it is naturally to be expected that a difference of opinion will arise in many points relative both to the External and Internal part of our religion; And therefore, they who conscientiously object to any of the Forms and Usages of our Church, however well founded in themselves and fit to be retained, are not so immediately concerned in the present Address.

But

But when Men, of what complexion and turn soever they may be, see You from an early age regularly brought acquainted with the grounds of our Faith, still as you grow up becoming more and more sensible of your deficiencies and Want of a Redeemer, and at all times so firmly believing in Jesus as to be constant in the Duties and Service he enjoins; When they see you united and happy among yourselves, *Walking in the House of God as friends*, and yet careful to shew Kindness, Moderation, Charity to those without and *to follow Peace with all men*; You do then take the best method to stifle the growth of prejudices, the readiest course to silence all objections, and to make the religion and *Ways of our Zion a Praise upon the Earth*. At least, should not this Effect be produced so fully as might be wished, Yet, whilst we proceed *building up and edifying* both ourselves and others in Virtue and Goodness, and earnestly

neftly ftiving to infufe the whole Spirit of Chriftianity into our Conduct, we may humbly hope that, agreeably to the gracious Promifes of the Gofpel, *God himfelf will come unto us and blefs us,** that the Graces of his Holy Spirit will fo effectually, tho' imperceptibly, mingle and cooperate with our own Endeavours towards *purifying our Hearts* in this life, that when the prefent Scene of things fhall pafs away, When *the Earthly Houfe of our Tabernacle* and the Fabric of this World itfelf *fhall be diffolved*, We may be qualified to become Inhabitants of that *Houfe made without Hands Eternal in the Heavens,†* and being introduced by *Jesus, the Author and Finifher of our Faith*, into the immediate Prefence of the Almighty, may there enjoy *at God's right hand Pleafures for Evermore.*

4. OC 58
 * John xiv. 23. Acts iii. 26. Pfal. lxxvii. 1.
 † 2 Cor. v. 1.

